

DIME NOVEL ROUND-UP

A monthly magazine devoted to the collecting, preservation and literature of the old-time dime and nickel novels, libraries and popular story papers.

Vol. 29 No. 11

November 15, 1961

Whole No. 350



DIME NOVEL SKETCHES #27

WILD WEST WEEKLY

One of Frank Tousey's "big six." Began October 24, 1902 and continued until August 5, 1927 with the issuance of No. 1294. The last original number was 644, Feb. 19, 1915. With No. 645 all issues were reprints of the earlier ones. Bright colored covers, 8x10 inches, 32 pages. Size changed to 6½x9½ with No. 948. In July 1917 Harry E. Wolff succeeded Frank Tousey as publisher and continued as publisher until July 2, 1926 when Westbury Publishing Co. (Street & Smith under a publishing pseudonym) bought him out. The stories featured the adventures of Young Wild West on his ramblings throughout the west with a group of friends. They were written by Cornelius Shea.

Nick Carter In Another Man's Shoes

By J. Edward Leithead

Part I

I cannot really call him "the last of the Nick Carter authors" because there is another author, whose action-and-thrill-packed 80-page novels added greatly to Nick Carter's fame, who is still very much with us I am glad to say. But anyway the Rev. Samuel C. Spalding belonged to that group that wrote the "older Nick Carters," published around 1910 to 1916, and he is the last of those who were his contemporaries in "dime novel" production. Nick Carter had long life, 1886 to 1936 (and still is well remembered), and there were many writers who two-finger-typed weekly and bi-monthly histories (one in pamphlet form, the other in book format) to carry on his crime-smashing career.

And Mr. Spalding was one of the Nick Carter authors who used an invisible model Remington (I remember them) and never re-read anything he typed before shooting it off to Street & Smith. Born in Kansas, graduating from Meadville (Pennsylvania) Theological Seminary in 1903, Rev. Spalding was a Unitarian minister in New Hampshire until an attack of typhoid fever left him crippled for life with arthritis. This last was to finish his career as a minister for he could not get about normally.

It is perhaps a long cry from the pulpit to the pulps, but Nick Carter was not altogether a stranger to Rev. Spalding when he came to write about him. In the boarding-house where he lived as a theology student was another boarder who stacked Nick Carters, and Mr. Spalding found these detective tales good and relaxing. Not that he ever thought he'd write one at that time.

Before he worked for Street & Smith, and while living in Troy, New York, with his wife's family, Mr. Spalding enrolled in a correspondence course on the writing of advertising copy, for it was very evident that he could not return to the pulpit. He says the correspondence school did all that it promised, even to securing him an ad writing job (and I'm sure Mr. Spalding must have shown aptitude for the work considering what he did later). It was a good job they got him, too, sale, advertising copy and service man on no less than the Cosmopolitan Magazine (I used to read the "Craig Kennedy" detective stories by Arthur B. Reeve in that magazine), but "after two years of a losing physical battle" he had to resign.

He was living in a New York apartment at this time and fortunately so,

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for he was handy when another opportunity knocked on his door. Somewhere Mr. Spalding had become acquainted with an author of Nick Carters (he does not state who it was), and the latter had Spalding try his hand at writing a detective story, which proved acceptable to the publishers and led to more work of this kind. Since Mr. Spalding says he wrote only for the 15-cent New Magnet Library, I believe this tryout may have been a Sexton Blake rewrite.

Confined to his apartment, Spalding was visited several times by a Street & Smith editor I knew very well at a later date—Frank E. Blackwell—and he was soon deep in the rewriting of Union Jack Sexton Blake detective tales into 15-cent Nick Carters. There was an agreement, says Spalding, between Street & Smith and the Amalgamated Press by which an exchange of story material was permitted.

"I wrote," he states, "a little over 100 Nick Carter full length novels (the regular paperbacks, which sold as I recall at 15 cents each) . . . They were always a little over 200 pages in length (about 60,000 words) and I did, as a rule, two a month.

"I was crippled and still am (at 82, Rev. Spalding is still very alert) and I did not visit the S & S office until years afterward, when I made a sentimental journal before leaving New York for Chicago. I typed them at first and afterwards dictated them for four hours a day to a stenographer.

"Actually, almost all of them were rewrites from British originals in the Union Jack Library, Sexton Blake, Detective, furnished me by S. & S., who had a gentleman's agreement with the British to exchange plots. The few originals I did were accepted, but they paid \$125.00 for originals and only \$100.00 for rewrites; and they reported my originals were a bit off-beat, too bizarre or something. That was the day before *Weird Stories* and *Science Fiction*.

"I never received or asked for copies and now possess none. I did have one original for many years—'Bolts From Blue Skies'—but have lost it. I do not

know its number or date. (Ralph Cummings wrote and asked me what the number was and somebody dug up a copy for Mr. Spalding). I also, by invitation, wrote up just one novelette and several short stories for *Detective Story Magazine* in its early days, under various names."

It is too bad that Rev. Spalding never kept any record of his stories, but before I attempt tracing them, I'd like to add this interesting bit about himself in connection with his Nick Carter writings:

" . . . I was once filmed, back in silent screen days, by a special feature outfit from Chicago (the Jim Handy concern, still making commercial features, I believe) as Nick himself in his lair. That was by arrangement with S. & S. And for years afterward I heard from friends in the Middle West telling me that they had seen me in the movies . . . I heard in those days of Col. Dey, as the first of the Nick Carter writers, and was told the he lived a short distance from me one time, in the neighborhood of Columbia University; but I never met him. I assumed when I was asked to pinch hit for Nick on the screen that he and others had been approached and were unavailable or unwilling."

So as not to lose the thread of the Rev. Spalding's quite busy life (in spite of handicap) from the time he quit writing Nick Carters up to the present, he went to Chicago in 1917 and became editor of the "Business Philosopher," a salesmanship magazine as were these others, "Specialty Salesman Magazine" (of which he was assistant editor) and his own publication which he personally edited, "How to Sell Magazine" (Sales Tales), lasting from 1921 to 1931.

About this time—in the 1930's—Rev. Spalding learned from a friend, a graduate of the same seminary at Meadville, Pa., of the Gould Farm, Great Barrington, Mass. It became the residence of himself and Mrs. Spalding for a quarter of a century. His wife passed away over six years ago. The last of the "old-time" Nick Carter writers is still at the Gould Farm, more

than holding his own. A salute to you, Rev. Spalding, especially for your courage and perseverance in the face of odds that would have caused many another one to give up!

Now for Mr. Spalding's "Nick Carters" or what we can discover of them without any memos to guide us . . .

Quite a few years ago—1950 to be exact—William H. Bradshaw of Chicago, a collector of Nick Carter and Sexton Blake novels, pointed out to me via letter that many of the later New Magnets were rewritten from Sexton Blake stories in the Union Jack Library. Up to that time I had heard, once before, there were some reprints of Sexton Blakes transformed into Nick Carters, but I had no copies of Union Jack to check against New Magnets, and Mr. Bradshaw was the first to come forward with definite information.

In the Newsy News column of DNR for May 1951, part of an interesting letter from Bradshaw was quoted by Ralph Cummings:

"Perhaps you may not know, but most and maybe all of the later stories in the New Magnet Library from about 850 on, are copies of stories which appeared in the Union Jack Library published over in England. These New Magnets carry a U. S. copyright date approximately four years later than when originally published in the Union Jack. I have compared many of both libraries and the reading and plot are practically identical, with only the characters and scenes changed."

Every dime novel reader knows that about 30 Sexton Blakes were rewritten into Gordon Keith stories for Brave and Bold Weekly with the by-line "Lawrence White, Jr." The first was No. 159, "That Boy, Checkers, or, Chased Halfway Around the World"—"Checkers" was Sexton Blake's assistant, Tinker, re-named. Other numbers of Brave and Bold "Gordon Keith-Sexton Blakes" were 168, 172, 181 (The Lost Chief, or, Gordon Keith's Adventures Among the Redskins), 184 (On Sampan and Junk, or, Gordon Keith Adrift in China—I mention the two titles showing how Keith-Blake skipped

around the globe between issues; it was all one to him, London, England, Africa, China, South America, the United States, Patagonia, and this scene shifting may have been partly responsible for his long, long life—but who doesn't like a whodunit?—188, 206, 210, 214, 232, 236, 240, 251, 258, 262, 266, 270, 274, 278, 282, 286, 298, 316, 326, 330, 346, 368, 373, 379, 385. And maybe this isn't a nice little set of colored cover detective novels!

Having no definite starting point in the search for Mr. Spalding's "Nicks" my best bet is to start checking backward, since I do not know what was the last "new" story printed in New Magnet. It was No. 1025, Wildfire, by "Nicholas Carter," and very likely this racetrack mystery yarn was a retitled, rewritten Sexton Blake tale of Mr. Spalding's (there was a stage melodrama of that title in the old days too, I think the beautiful Lillian Russell was in it). With No. 925, A Klondike Claim, S. & S. had started reprinting New Magnet's own earlier numbers—between 924 and 1025, these reprints were 925, 928, 938, 940, 942, 944, 946, 948, 950, 952, 954, 956, 958, 960, 962, 964, 966, 968, 970, 972, 974, 976, 978, 980 (with 982 they began running them in bunches of 3 reprints to one "new" or rather rewritten Sexton Blake), 982, 983, 984, 986, 987, 988, 990, 991, 992, 994, 995, 996, 998, 999, 1000, 1002, 1003, 1004, 1006, 1007, 1008, 1010, 1011, 1012, 1014, 1015, 1016, 1018, 1019, 1020, 1022, 1023, 1024. Everything above No. 1025 was a reprint from earlier New Magnets.

The 5c Nick Carter Stories, 160 issues, contained 42 reprints from New Nick Carter Weekly in series of 3, and 117 new stories, a few by Fred Dey but most by Fred Davis, each in a series of 3 for reprinting in book form, and a single new issue over the 117 new ones, No. 160, The Yellow Label, which, with the discontinuance of Nick Carter Stories was complete in Detective Story Magazine, and later reprinted in New Magnet No. 977, The Yellow Label. The other 117 N. C. S. were all reprinted in New Magnet, 3 to a volume, a total of 39 New Mag-

nets: first was 815, A Riddle of Identities (one of Dey's last), 817, Cornered at Last, a third one whose changed title has me baffled, 823, The Spider's Parlor, 826, The International Crook League, 829, The Purple Spot, 844, A Skyline Message, between 844 and the next is one but I can't figure which, 857, The Deeper Game, another one here unsolved, 869, The Last Call, 873, The Crook's Blind, 877, The Fixed Alibi, 881, Birds of Prey, 885, The Wolf Within, 889, A Crime in Paradise, 893, The Blind Man's Daughter, 896, In Record Time, 898, The \$100,000 Kiss, 902, The Middle Link, 906, A New Serpent in Eden, 910, The Gargoni Girdle, 914, The Girl Prisoner, 918, The Red Plague, here somewhere is one with title unknown, 930, The Stolen Brain, 951, The Needy Nine, 953, Outlaws of the Blue, 955, Found in the Jungle, 957, Broken Bars, 959, Won by Magic, 961, The Man They Held Back, 963, The Pressing Peril, 965, The Sultan's Pearls, 967, Paying the Price, 969, The Network of Crime, 971, The Crossed Needles, 973, Blood Will Tell, 975, The Crook's Double—and, of course, 977, The Yellow Label. The publishers didn't bother with the 42 Nick Carter Weekly reprints in Nick Carter Stories at that time since they had already been reprinted in earlier New Magnets.

Between New Magnet 815 and 1025 we now have eliminated as possible Sexton Blake rewrites 57 reprints of New Magnet's own earlier issues and 40 reprints from Nick Carter Stories, a total of 97. I can up that to 98; No. 884, The Door of Doubt, was a reprint of Old Broadbrim, No. 4, Old Broadbrim's Crimmon Knot, or, The Bats of Baltimore (by St. George Rathborne) and doubtless a couple of others from that weekly in the book, for they, like Shield Weekly (Sheridan Keene, Fred Davis's creation just as Harrison Keith and Felix Boyd were his), were all or nearly all reprinted in New Magnet as Nick Carters (the demand for Nicks, you perceive, was really very heavy at one time). I would like to spot these Broadbrims and eliminate them as rewrites mis-

taken for Sexton Blakes, but a set of Old Broadbrims to check them is rarest of the rare.

At any rate, by the method I'm using I feel that I can come close to identifying much of Mr. Spalding's production; between New Magnet 815 and 1025, we can now display the following titles as being Sexton Blake rewrites, with the possibility that Spalding will recognize a few after all these years (he will know No. 853, for sure), and not forgetting that some Old Broadbrims are mixed in somewhere, beginning possibly with No. 884, since it contained No. 4 of the weekly (I just happened to know that single issue), and also 4 reprints from Nick Carter Stories whose titles I couldn't identify. Here, then, is the list:

New Magnet 816, When Clews are Hidden, 818, For the Sake of Revenge, 819, When All is Staked, 820, Pointers to Crime, 821, The Day of Reckoning, 822, A Tower of Strength, 824, Knots in the Noose, 825, In the Shadow of Fear, 827, A Thief in the Night, 828, Brought to the Mark, 820, A Duel of Brains, 831, A Maze of Motives, 832, On the Eve of Triumph, 833, Diamond Cut Diamond, 834, When the Fetters are Forged, 835, Toying With Fate, 836, The Heart of the Underworld, 837, Repaid in Like Coin, 838, In Suspicion's Shadow, 839, A Plea for Justice, 840, Driven to Desperation, 841, The Finish of a Rascal, 842, Doomed to Failure, 843, A Fight for Right, 845, After the Verdict, 846, The Sandal Wood Slipper, 847, The Grafters, 848, The Thief Who Was Robbed, 849, Not on the Records, 850, Wanted: A Clew, 851, A Tangled Skein, 852, The Bullion Mystery, 853, The Man of Riddles, 854, A Miscarriage of Justice, 855, The Gloved Hand, 856, Spoilers and the Spoils, 858, Bolts From Blue Skies, 859, Unseen Foes, 860, Knaves in High Places, 861, The Microbe of Crime, 862, In the Toils of Fear, 863, A Heritage of Trouble, 864, Called to Account, 865, The Just and the Unjust, 866, Instinct at Fault, 867, A Rogue Worth Trapping, 868, A Rope of Slender Threads, 870, The Spoils of Chance, 871, A struggle With Destiny, 872,

The Slave of Crime, 874, A Rascal of Quality, 875, With Shackles of Fire, 876, The Man Who Changed Faces, 878, Out With the Tide, 879, The Soul Destroyers, 880, The Wages of Rascality, 882, When Destruction Threatens, 883, The Keeper of Black Hounds, 886, A Perilous Parole, 887, The Trail of the Fingerprints, 888, Dodging the Law, 890, On the Ragged Edge, 891, The Red God of Tragedy, 892, The Man Who Paid, 894, One Object in Life, 895, As a Crook Sows, 897, Held in Suspense, 899, Just One Slip, 900, On a Million Dollar Trail, 901, A Weird Treasure, 903, To the Ends of the Earth, 904, When Honors Pall, 905, The Yellow Brand, 907, When Brave Men Tremble, 908, A Test of Courage, 909, Where Peril Beckons, 911, Rascals & Co., 912, Too Late to Talk, 913, Satan's Apt Pupil, 915, The Danger of Folly, 916, One Shipwreck Too Many, 917, Scourged by Fear, 919, Scoundrels Rampant, 920, Frem Clew to Clew, 921, When Rogues Conspire, 922, Twelve in a Grave, 923, The Great Opium Case, 924, A Conspiracy of Rumors, 926, The Evil Formula, 927, The Man of Many Faces, 929, The Burden of Proof, 932, The Magic Necklace, 933, 'Round the World for a Quarter, 934, Over the Edge of the World, 935, In the Grip of Fate, 936, The Case of Many Clues, 937, The Sealed Door, 939, The Man Without a Will, 941, A Clew from the Unknown, 943, A Mixed Up Mess, 945, The Adder's Brood, 947, For a Pawned Crown, 949, The Hate That Kills, 979, The Amphitheater Plot, 981, Death in Life, 985, Clew Against Clew, 989, Snarled Identities, 993, The Sea Fox, 997, Partners in Peril, 1001, A Battle for the Right, 1005, A Broken Bond, 1009, Hidden Foes, 1013, A Threefold Disappearance, 1017, A Spinner of Death, 1021, The Secret of the Marble Mantel, 1025, Wildfire.

(to be continued)

NEWSY NEWS

by Reckless Ralph F. Cummings
161 Pleasant St., South Grafton, Mass.

Just think, Ed J. McNabb of Brooklyn, N. Y. was up here Oct. 12th and 13th, and the last day he was here, I took him down town to dinner but we didn't get any, as the place was closed, so while he was waiting for the bus I bought a couple of little pies, and there we were in front of the church, eating a pie apiece, as a fellow says (almost a Christmas pie apiece). Ed came here Thursday afternoon, and I was up in Worcester. My nephew and niece and children brought him up to Clyde Wakefields, and waited for me there. After I arrived, and took Ed to a restaurant, then back to Clyde's for a good 3 hour visit, then Clyde drove us down here—guess Ed saw stuff at both places he never saw before. Ed sure is a very fine fellow, wish he had of had time to visit with other members of H. H. Bro. up this way. Some other time.

Mr. and Mrs. Don S. Learnard and Mr. and Mrs. Harold Poore, were here on Sat., Oct 7th for a little visit—seeing as Harold didn't have the time off that he expected to have, to be able to visit all up this way, he and his wife went up to see Don and his wife, then Don brought them out here to see me. Harold is collecting certain Stratemeyer books he needs to complete his set, and Don is still on the trail of good old Liberty Boys of 76.

Ed Levy also visited with me on Sept. 8th, on his way back from a visit to Ralph P. Smith's at Lawrence. That is 4 old members I've never seen before till this year, and a new one Henry Shepardson from Orange, Mass. He, his wife and son were down here July 18th.

Heard the sad news a while back, that A. Simon passed away Sept. 8th, 1961, when a letter was returned to

MEMBERSHIP CHANGES

- 87 James F. Stroeker, 4332A Gibson Ave., St. Louis 10, Mo. (New address)
- 203 John K. Pollard, Jr., 1428 Ontario Ave., Pasadena, Calif. (New address)
- 242 Guy M. Kline, 1540 Russell St., Baltimore 30, Md. (New member)

me, marked deceased and dated when he died.

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